

Key Differences Between the Fulbright US Scholar Program and the Fulbright Specialist Program



The Fulbright program encompasses numerous initiatives; some enable American citizens to teach, conduct research, or complete projects abroad. Others bring visiting students and scholars to the United States to enhance campuses across the country with their skills and enthusiasm. With so many programs, occasionally there is confusion about which Fulbright might be the best fit. This handout explains key differences between the Fulbright US Scholar Program (the flagship program for US faculty hoping to pursue Fulbright awards) and the Fulbright Specialist Program (a short-term option for experienced faculty with specific expertise to share).

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| Fulbright US Scholar Program | | Fulbright Specialist Program |
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| https://fulbrightscholars.org/ | Website | https://fulbrightspecialist.worldlearning.org/ |
| Funded by the US Department of State and administered by the Institute of International Education (IIE). | Administrator | Funded by the US Department of State and administered by World Learning |
| <p>The Fulbright US Scholar Program awards provide opportunities for faculty as well as for professionals, artists, journalists, scientists, lawyers, independent scholars and many others to teach, research, or conduct a combination of teaching and research.</p> <p>Over 800 fellowships are awarded annually in over 400 types of opportunities.</p> | Purpose | <p>The program pairs highly qualified US academics and professionals with host institutions abroad to share their expertise, strengthen institutional linkages, hone their skills, gain international experience, and learn about other cultures while building capacity at their overseas host institutions.</p> <p>Over 400 specialists travel abroad each year on project-based exchanges.</p> |
| 1946 | Established | 2001 |
| US citizens (permanent residence is not sufficient); other restrictions apply | Eligibility | US citizens (permanent residence is not sufficient); other restrictions apply |
| 2-12 months; some awards allow a Flex option to divide the time into separate trips | Length | 2-6 weeks (varies according to project) |
| Most fields | Disciplines | Many fields; Fulbright Specialist activities fall within select eligible disciplines , each with designated specializations. |
| Worldwide, over 130 countries | Geographic Area | Worldwide, approximately 150 countries |

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| Applicant selects and applies to only one award per cycle; most awards are for a single country. For multi-country projects, applicants should search for Global or multi-country awards. | Country Selection | Applicants with an interest in a particular world region or country may indicate preferences, along with relevant language proficiency, at the time of application. However, this will not guarantee placement in the desired country or region. |
| Award amounts vary by country, project length, and activity. Dependent allowance available for many awards. | Award Amount & Benefits | Round-trip economy class airfare between the US and host country; transit allowance; visa fees; daily honorarium; enrollment in a limited health benefits program; lodging; meals; in-country transportation. Dependent allowance is not available. |
| Varies; proficiency in local language is required or recommended for some countries | Language Requirement | Varies, though there is no language requirement to join the Roster; proficiency in local language is required or recommended for some placements |
| Submitted electronically via IIE application portal; application components include project statement, short essays, CV, letters of recommendation, bibliography, syllabi, letter of invitation, language proficiency, digital portfolio (some components only applicable for certain awards) | Application Process | Submitted electronically via World Learning application portal; individuals apply to join the Fulbright Specialist Roster. If selected, individuals remain on Roster for three years. Host institutions submit project proposals to their Fulbright Commission; if a proposal is approved, a Specialist from the roster is matched to the project. There is no guarantee to be matched; individuals on Roster must be matched and complete an exchange to be considered a Fulbright Specialist. |
| Mid-September each year; International Education Administrators (IEA) program deadlines may vary | Deadline | Peer review panels evaluate applications to join the Fulbright Specialist Program every eight weeks. |
| Fulbright Scholar Liaison: Joy Campbell joycamp@msu.edu , 517-884-2167 216 International Center Begin here: http://isp.msu.edu/fulbright | MSU Contact Information | No official MSU contact; Joy Campbell can connect you to World Learning if needed Begin here: https://fulbrightspecialist.worldlearning.org/ |